



THE RESPONDER

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE • JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

OIL SPILL PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAM • JUNE 2010



Texas Prepares for Possible Impact from Deepwater Horizon Spill in the Gulf of Mexico

As the Texas General Land Office prepares for a possible impact to the Texas coast, the agency has been assisting our neighbors to the east following the sinking of the MODU Deepwater Horizon. As part of one of the largest oil spill responses the Gulf of Mexico has ever seen, the Land Office deployed fire boom from its Corpus Christi office to Venice, Louisiana. In addition, two bird rehabilitation trailers from the Land Office's La Porte office deployed to Gulfport, Mississippi. "In a scenario like this, state boundaries disappear," Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson said. "There's only one Gulf Coast and we're duty bound as Americans to protect it."

Land Office Regional offices all along the Texas coast have been busy meeting with all three U.S. Coast Guard captains in both Sectors to discuss pre-planning activities, review all three Area Contingency Plans, discuss sensitive habitats and prioritize protection areas. The agency has also participated in situational awareness meetings with numerous stakeholders along the coast, sharing information and contingency planning activities. A Land Office representative was sent to the Robert, Louisiana Area Command Center to open lines of communications with the Unified Command, offer support and lay the groundwork for possible integration into the command. If a significant impact occurs in Texas, the Land Office will likely send a representative back to Robert. Any and all operations in Texas will be conducted using the Incident Command System and decisions will be made via the Unified Command.

Beach assessment continues to be conducted, and any oil ob-

served will be reported. Austin-based Land Office personnel continue to have daily discussions with NOAA trajectory and modeling personnel in Seattle assisting with the production of trajectory models. Data from the Land Office-sponsored Texas Automated Buoy System (TABS) is also being provided to the NOAA modelers.

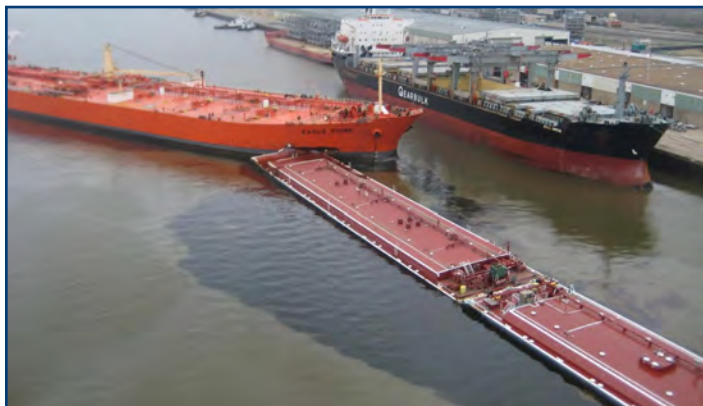
A very slow westward migration is predicted in the future. If oil makes land fall in Texas, it will be many days from now. BP has been designated the "responsible party" and as such, is responsible for all cleanup costs associated with any oiling of Texas beaches attributed to this spill. Dr. Buzz Martin, the State Scientific Support Coordinator for oil spill response, is currently working with the NOAA Office of Response & Restoration (OR&R) trajectory group. Dr. Martin has a 15-year working relationship with this team. He is receiving twice daily updates from this group and is fielding questions from them regarding the expected behavior of currents on the Texas-Louisiana shelf. NOAA OR&R is making extensive use of the state's trajectory capability developed by the Land Office and Texas A&M University. Since the domain (area modeled) of the Texas Automated Buoy System ROMS hydrodynamic model includes the Mississippi Delta region, NOAA OR&R asked the Land Office to modify its usual forecasts to extend further into the future (going from 48 to 72 hours) to better fit the planning needs of the Unified Command.

The Land Office will continue to keep an eye on the Gulf of Mexico. It's possible, perhaps even likely, that tar balls will eventually show up. "This ain't our first rodeo with tar balls," said Greg Pollock, Deputy Commissioner of the Oil Spill Program. "We will be ready."

Eagle Otome Spill Handled Expeditiously

A January 23 collision between the 800-foot tanker, *Eagle Otome*, and the towing vessel, *Dixie Vengeance*, left a 15-foot by 8-foot hole in the tanker that was scheduled for a delivery to ExxonMobil in Beaumont. Roughly 462,000 gallons of crude oil escaped through the gaping hole in the tanker. What started as a quiet Saturday on the river would turn into a whirlwind of people and equipment arriving from all over the nation.

Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson and Greg Pollock, Deputy Commissioner for Oil Spill Prevention and Response, traveled from Austin the next morning to participate in a press conference with the Unified Command. Patterson praised the effectiveness and speed of the response. "While every spill is unfortunate, the training and professionalism of state and federal responders



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The *Dixie Vengeance* left a gaping hole in the *Eagle Otome*.

EDUCATE ♦ PREVENT ♦ RESPOND

Eagle Otome Spill Handled Expeditiously

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and independent contractors ensures that the public and the environment are protected, and an environmental crisis has been averted," Patterson said.

The majority of the oil was contained in a two-mile stretch of the Sabine-Neches Waterway. At the height of the response, more than 100 vacuum trucks conducted shoreline recovery operations and more than 1,000 responders worked around the clock.

More than 20 miles of containment and deflection (hard) boom and 10 miles of sorbent boom were deployed. The booming strategy was successful in protecting Keith Lake and J.D. Murphee Wildlife Refuge, two sensitive areas that were of major concern. However, there were reports of 25 oiled birds, with 18 being successfully rehabilitated. This was the first big wildlife impact in Texas waters since 2001.

A major concern during the spill was vessel traffic. The Sabine Neches Waterway was closed to all vessel traffic immediately following the collision. The closure area also impacted the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway where it merges with the Sabine Neches Waterway just south of Port Arthur. This had a huge impact on vessel traffic all along the Texas coast, impacting hundreds of brown-water vessels as well as tanker traffic. The channel was reopened to all vessel traffic six days after the initial incident.

The unified command was comprised of J.T. Ewing (Texas General Land Office, State On-Scene Coordinator), Captain Plunkett (U.S. Coast Guard, Federal On-Scene Coordinator), and Rich Russel (AET, Inc, responsible party Incident Commander).

While the incident was responded to in a timely manner, there were many challenges that kept planners and responders scrambling to stay ahead of the situation. From currents greater than 10 knots to frontal passages and heavy rain events, there was no shortage of challenging situations for the response team to tackle. While

most of the product was contained in a two-mile stretch of the waterway, more than 70 miles of actual shoreline were impacted when boat slips, both sides of the waterway, and all the lightly oiled areas are taken into account.

The *Eagle Otome* spill was the largest in Texas inland waters since the 1994 San Jacinto River pipeline spills. A carefully crafted state coastal oil spill response program, committed partners and stakeholders, persistent training and drills, and 16 years of experience resulted in the efficient, professional response to a spill that could have wreaked havoc.

Traveling the entire area three months later by boat, there is little evidence that approximately 10,000 barrels of oil had ever been in the water.



The bow of the *Dixie Vengeance* was heavily damaged after punching a 15-foot by 8-foot hole in the *Eagle Otome*.

Vessel Registration Requirements

Owners or operators of certain vessels operating in Texas coastal waters must submit vessel-specific information to the Texas General Land Office. The required information includes 24-hour contact information, vessel identification, gross tonnage, and capacity for fuel and oil for each vessel covered by the notification. Vessels operating in Texas coastal waters are still being found not to have submitted any of the information to the Land Office.

If you are uncertain if this rule applies to your company, you merely need to answer the following questions:

- ◆ Is your company the owner or operator of a vessel required by the Oil Pollution Act to have a current vessel response plan aboard?
- ◆ Is your company the owner or operator of a vessel in excess of 400 gross tons and required by the International Maritime Organization to have a current shipboard oil pollution emergency plan aboard?

If you answered "yes" to either of these, then the rule defi-

nately applies to your company, assuming your vessel(s) operates in Texas coastal waters. The simplest way to meet the requirements is to submit the information and maintain it through our website at www.glo.state.tx.us/oilspill. To establish a company account and obtain a password, please contact Peggy Spies, Director of Maritime Affairs at peggy.spies@glo.state.tx.us or by phone at 512-463-6554.

The Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act allows a civil penalty of not less than \$100 and no more than \$10,000 per violation for each day of violation, not to exceed \$125,000. Vessel owners and operators are encouraged to review the registration and notification requirements to ensure they're in compliance. This year, the Land Office will use PortVision, a Web-based system for monitoring real-time vessel activity along Texas coastal waters to assist in determining commercial vessel compliance. Non-compliance could prompt a visit by Land Office personnel.

Superior Crude Tank Failure Causes Multi-Agency Response

On February 10, the Texas General Land Office was notified that a 55,000-barrel crude oil tank near Ingleside had ruptured and suffered complete failure. The storage tank, operated by Superior Crude, spilled approximately 52,000 barrels of crude oil.

The Land Office's Oil Spill Corpus Christi Office Region 3 deployed its Command Post, establishing a Unified Command near the scene. The U.S. Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Railroad Commission of Texas, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department all responded.

Land Office Senior Response Officer Matthew McCauley served as the lead responder while Land Office Regional Director Jimmy

Martinez was the State On-Scene Coordinator (SOSC) for the response. The Land Office maintained around-the-clock operations during the incident with four response officers, a Deputy SOSC, and two administrative specialists assisting. The event garnered media interest with all local major TV affiliates covering the incident.

Of the 52,000 barrels spilled, approximately 2,200 barrels of South Texas crude oil entered a fresh water lake adjacent to the site through a breach in secondary containment. Miller Environmental, hired by the responsible party, used three drum skimmers to remove approximately 2,200 barrels of crude oil from the freshwater lake and wetland.

Aramco Services Company 2010 PREP Drill

The incident was fictional but the scenario was about as real-life as it gets for Texas General Land Office oil spill responders participating in Aramco Services Company's 2010 PREP Drill at the Galveston Convention Center.

More than 100 oil spill specialists converged on the island from March 2-3, responding to a simulated discharge of approximately 27,000 barrels of crude oil resulting from a vessel collision with an underwater obstruction.

The drill commenced at 0500 with the Tank Ship SIRIUS STAR entering the Galveston Lightering Area. As the vessel approached a rendezvous point for lightering operations, the crew felt a significant shudder and vibration throughout the vessel's hull. Shortly after anchoring the vessel, a significant drop in pressure readings on two starboard cargo tanks occurred—the spill event had commenced. A subsequent examination by T&T Marine Salvage personnel revealed significant damage to the hull below the waterline, with major damage to the starboard wing ballast tanks as well. A major spill event had occurred only 58 miles southeast of Galveston. Early spill trajectory models indicated possible land impact points from Galveston Island to Surfside Beach.

A Unified Command (UC) was identified, with representatives from the Texas General Land Office, Aramco Services Company and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Many response assets converged to battle the spill event. Dispersants were applied in the pre-approval zone in conjunction with on-water mechanical recovery to mitigate the spill. Pre-beach impact planning and shoreline impact strategies helped minimize

impact to sensitive areas along the beach and north of San Luis Pass. Several plans were drafted and utilized in conjunction with implementing local Area Contingency Plans.

After the event, State On-Scene Coordinator Rich Arnhart of the Land Office's Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program tried to gauge the success of the drill.

"With a show of hands, how many of you learned something these last two days?" Arnhart asked. All participants raised their hands.



Responders at the Incident Command Center.

CLEAN GULF 2010 set for October 19-20 in Tampa

The Texas General Land Office is organizing this year's CLEAN GULF 2010, which offers a unique opportunity for industry to learn more about challenges, trends and solutions in protecting the Gulf of Mexico's natural resources. From in-depth training workshops, to information-packed seminars led by the industry's best minds, to our largest solutions expo ever, CLEAN GULF offers the most comprehensive learning experience in the region.

The conference and exhibition are an outstanding opportunity to enhance your visibility to the oil/hazmat spill, marine fire and marine salvage and port/vessel security industry. You'll also be able to promote your company's corporate message or product service to more than 2,000 expected attendees.

Clean Gulf is co-hosted by the Gulf Coast states Texas, Loui-

siana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida, along with the United States Coast Guard, and Minerals Management Service. The conference is also supported by Marine Spill Response Corporation, the National Response Corporation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as numerous corporate and industry sponsors.

For more information regarding Clean Gulf – visit our website at [http://www.glo.state.tx.us/oilspill/program/clean gulf 2010](http://www.glo.state.tx.us/oilspill/program/clean%20gulf%202010) or call Debbie Saenz, Marketing or Laura Couvillon, Trade Fair Group – Clean Gulf at 832-242-1969.

For future planning, next year's Clean Gulf 2011 will be held at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas during November 2011.

GLO Responds to Barge Explosion in Ingleside

On March 25, the Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division was notified of an explosion on the *MOC II*, a tank barge operated by Third Coast Towing, LLC. Land Office Senior Response Officer James Duenes responded. Other agencies involved included the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Duenes observed a small amount of pollution resulting from the explosion and requested that the responsible party surround the *MOC II* with containment boom. The boom kept pollution from reaching adjacent wetlands and facilitated its recovery. A joint USCG and Land Office overflight was ordered for an area assessment. No further pollution was observed.

The Land Office maintained a constant presence during the emergency response phase, fire-fighting operations, and ICW debris and pollution removal. Fortunately, no one was seriously injured due to the explosion and the barge was nearly empty of product at the time of the blast, resulting in minimal impact to the environment.



The tank barge *MOC II*, as seen from an overflight after its explosion on March 25.

Buzz Martin Receives Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Buzz Martin is the most recent recipient of the Texas General Land Office's Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Martin was recognized for his outstanding work developing and coordinating the production of the Texas Coastal Oil Spill Planning and Response DVD-ROM Toolkit.

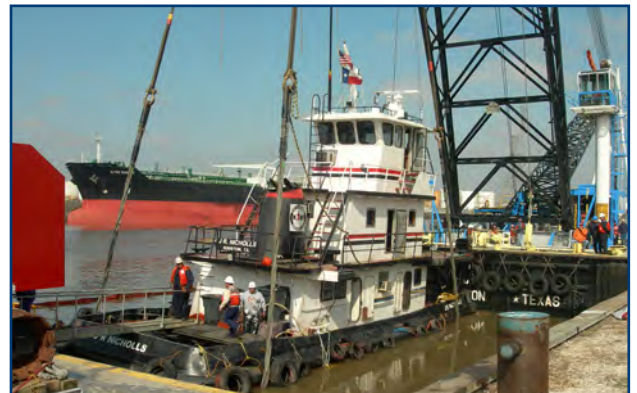


In its 11th year, the Toolkit is regarded by users as one of the most important and indispensable spill response tools available. Dr. Martin gathers critical Toolkit components from a wide variety of sources and painstakingly formats and links them together to produce the end product. This is no small task given the disparate sources of information. With almost 7,000 links on the latest version, Dr. Martin must ensure that all of them connect and function seamlessly for the user. With each passing year, the Toolkit gets better and represents an increasingly sophisticated asset to its users.

Distributed each year at the Clean Gulf Conference, it's always one of the highlights of the show and prompts hundreds of visitors to stop by the Oil Spill Program's booth. This allows the program to gather excellent contact information while distributing the Toolkit to customers.

Dr. Martin continues to make advances with his research and development responsibilities, and his significant contributions to the entire response community are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program and the Texas General Land Office.

J.R. Nicholls Sinks in Houston Ship Channel



The *J.R. Nicholls* sank on February 10.

The Texas General Land Office Region II La Porte Oil Spill Office responded to a diesel spill from the vessel *J.R. Nicholls*, which sank in the Houston Ship Channel while underway at 2230 on February 10. The cause and spill amount are still under investigation.

Shortly after the spill, a unified command was set up with the Land Office, U.S. Coast Guard and Kinder Morgan. Personnel from the Emergency Response Team of Lyondell rescued four people from the water and deployed their pre-staged boom to contain the spill within the vicinity of the Lyondell facility. The majority of spill cleanup operations were completed by T&T Marine Services on February 15.

The Land Office was pleased with the quick response of the Lyondell emergency response personnel. The implementation of their emergency response plan kept the spill from spreading further down the Houston Ship Channel.

Wildlife Reaps Rewards



WR&E group cleaning an oiled cormorant in the GLO's Feathered Animal Rehabilitation Trailer.

Wildlife Response and Education, Inc. (WR&E) conducts Oiled Wildlife Rehabilitation workshops through funding from the Texas General Land Office and donations from WR&E's many

partners. These workshops provide valuable training to industry representatives, state and federal responders and potential volunteers. Hundreds of people have attended these workshops over the past 11 years.

WR&E has been responsible not only for responding to spills, but also training responders, facility employees, potential volunteers, and running its full-time wildlife rehabilitation center. Since 1994, WR&E has responded to 21 spills on the Texas coast. It has also responded to multiple spills inland and out of state. Two hundred and fourteen animals have been cared for with 171 of them being released back into the wild. That's an astounding 79.9 percent release rate.

In 2006, a new company was formed out of WR&E's successful staff. Since 2007, Wildlife Response Services (WRS) has responded to three oil spills and cared for 25 animals. Although seven of those animals were dead on arrival, the company's release rate

is still 72 percent. WRS is able to hold two workshops per year thanks to donations from its partners and funding from the Land Office.

The Land Office has maintained a wildlife rehabilitation trailer since the mid-1990s. This trailer has been used at the Wildlife Rehabilitation Workshops held by the rehab organizations and can be used for responses by either the rehabilitation organizations or responsible parties. Until 2008, a single rehabilitation trailer was housed at the Land Office's La Porte office and was deployed wherever it was needed. In 2008, Citgo Refinery, Corpus Christi, donated a rehabilitation trailer to the Land Office's Corpus Christi field office. The donation came at the perfect time. There had not been an oil spill involving wildlife on the Texas coast since 2006. Then came the summer of 2009, and things changed.

From July 2009 to February 2010, there were five oil spills with 32 individual animals impacted and 19 successfully rehabilitated.

In 2010, the Land Office trailer from La Porte and WRS were used for a spill in Port Arthur, the Citgo trailer and WR&E were used for a spill in Corpus Christi, and WR&E used their facilities at the Houston SPCA for a spill in Galena Park.



A wood duck being cleaned.

GLO Honors EPCO and SPT with OSPRA Awards

The Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program is pleased to announce the latest OSPRA award winners. This award recognizes organizations and individuals that excelled in their preparedness and prevention efforts.

EPCO, Inc. (formerly Seaway TEPPCO) was presented with the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program's OSPRA Award for outstanding initiatives that improved spill preparedness and enhanced prevention and response in the Freeport area. The initiatives that resulted in the award were: the construction of two storage tanks and a transfer system to service oil vessels calling at its terminal, allowing for dockside bunker operations; an aggressive proactive maintenance schedule of facility hydraulic systems improvements, including more frequent hose replacements; the utilization of an alternate hydraulic fluid (non-petroleum based); replacement of five existing hydraulic-actuated fire monitors with new electric-actuated monitors; pre-positioned containment boom placement; and the long-standing pre-approval process on all tankers visiting its terminal to ensure they're operated and managed in a safe and responsible manner, free of deficiencies that could pose a risk to the terminal. Accepting the award was Mr. Jimmy Nealy.

SPT Inc. (formerly Skaugen Petro Trans, Inc.) was presented with the Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program's OSPRA Award for outstanding initiatives that improved spill preparedness and enhanced prevention and response along the Texas Gulf Coast. The initiatives that resulted in the award were: a recent enhanced tanker design (afamax) with double-hull construction, including the

pump-room and bunker tanks; utilization of double-walled, high-velocity transfer hoses and emergency release couplings; vessels equipped with bow thrusters and high-lift 70 degree schilling rudders to enhance maneuverability; and the continued active involvement by SPT Inc. in various industry- and agency-led committees. Accepting the award was Mr. Simon Duncan.



Jimmy Nealy and La Porte Regional Director Rich Arnhart.



Simon Duncan and La Porte Regional Director Rich Arnhart.

GLO Responds Quickly to the *Babe S* Spill

Quick work by Texas General Land Office oil spill responders in Region 4 kept more than 1,500 gallons of diesel from spoiling the coast. On Nov. 6, 2009, the Texas General Land Office Region 4 Office was notified by Greg Martinez of the Port Isabel Navigation District that the fishing vessel *Babe S*, a previously documented sunken vessel, was taking on water at the Port Isabel Shrimp Basin. Land Office Response Officer Michael Janskowski was dispatched to investigate the spill. It was apparent that the *Babe S* was listing heavily to the port side and had taken on massive amounts of water. Red-dye diesel had begun to pool up on the portside bow of the vessel. Not knowing how much fuel was in the vessel, Janskowski knew it was more than enough to warrant immediate booming of the area. He proceeded to contact cleanup contractor Chemical Response and Remediation Contractors (CRRC).

Cleanup crews placed boom around the vessel to prevent further spreading of the product. Just before midnight, the source of the spill was secured and operations were suspended until the next morning.

An additional 100 feet of boom was placed around the vessel the next day. MO-VAC Service Co. was also called in to assist with skimming operations. Crews worked throughout the day ensuring that the diesel didn't spread to other areas. As the evening approached, boom was left in place to prevent the escape of any remaining diesel. Remediation of the affected area continued throughout day three. As evening approached, the cleanup crews finished their operations. Boom was left in place as a preventive measure, but the spill cleanup was deemed complete. It was later determined, based on both the drum skimmers and absorbents used, that the *Babe S* spilled 1,587 gallons of diesel.



An estimated 1,587 gallons of red-dye diesel spilled from the *Babe S*.



The fishing vessel *Babe S*, a previously documented sunken vessel, began taking on water at the Port Isabel Shrimp Basin

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**Report oil spills
1-800-832-8224
24 hours**

The Responder is published by the Texas General Land Office. Questions and comments may be submitted to Debbie Warwick via e-mail at debbie.warwick@glo.state.tx.us or by phone at 281-470-6597.

Derelict Vessel Program Drafts Administrative Rules

The Texas General Land Office Derelict Vessel Removal Program is drafting administrative rules to enhance the predictability and implementation of vessel and structure removals along the Texas coast. This comes nearly five years after the passage of House Bill 2096, which granted Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson the authority to address the issue of wrecked, derelict or substantially dismantled vessels or structures in Texas coastal waters.

The current goal is to publish the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Texas Register by the end of May or early June 2010. The Land Office will take public comments for a 30-day period prior to final adoption. Any questions can be directed to William D. "Bill" Grimes, Derelict Vessel Removal Program Manager at 512-475-1464 or by e-mail at william.grimes@glo.state.tx.us.